



## IN "THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH" MARILYN MONROE

plays a character known simply as The Girl.

And in this book, by means of more than 100 candid photographs, you will follow Miss Monroe through the making of this picture.

There's never been a picture book like it.

Intimate, human, and fascinating, these pages are a very personal record of six weeks in the working life of a star.



BALLANTINE BOOKS  
*presents*

# MARILYN MONROE

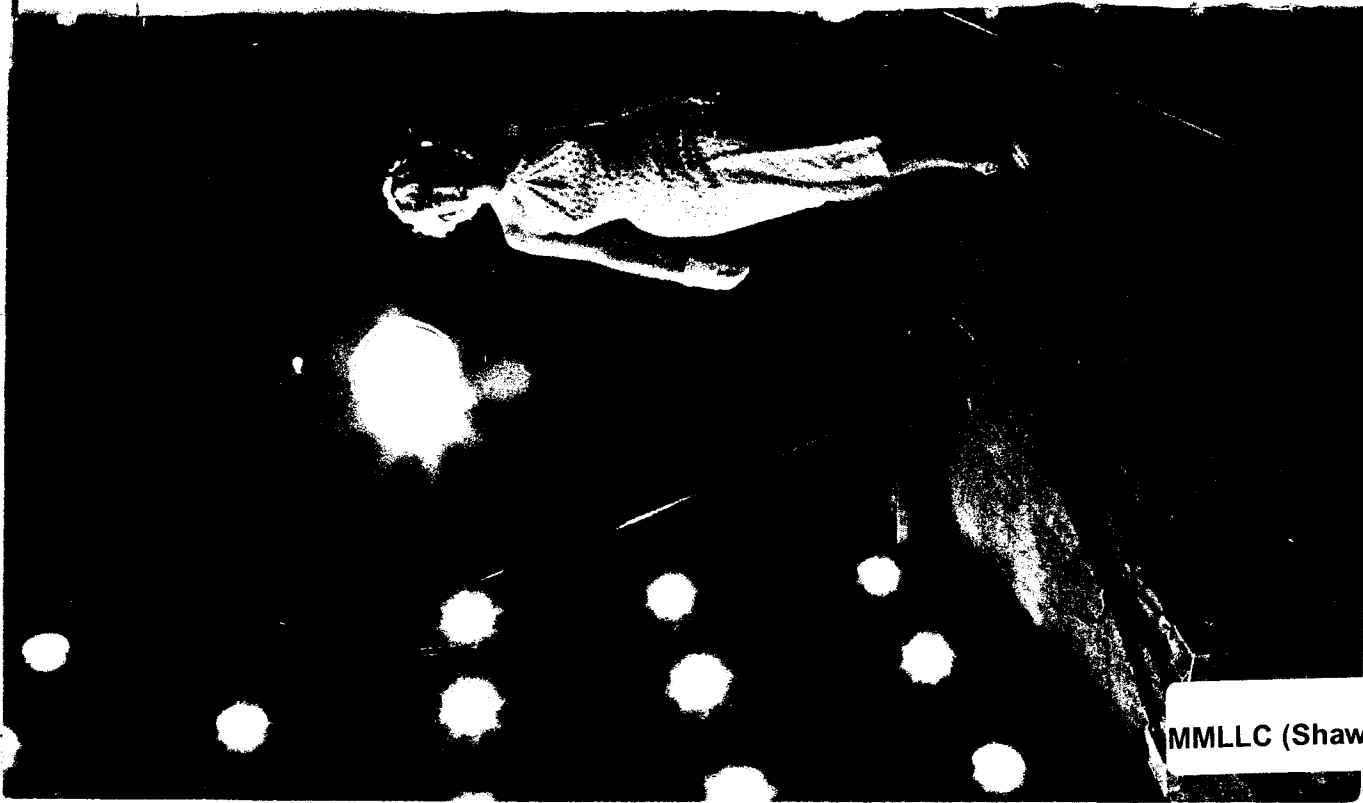
as

## The Girl

The candid picture-story  
of the making of  
"The Seven Year Itch"

*Photographs by Sam Shaw*

Foreword by George Axelrod



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**MARILYN  
MONROE  
AS THE GIRL**

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# FOREWORD

by

**GEORGE AXELROD**

author of "The Seven Year Itch"

In the last three years I have seen at least twenty different actresses play the part of The Girl in "The Seven Year Itch." I have seen The Girl as a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead. I've heard her say her lines with a British accent, French, in Italian, in German. Many of the actresses have been wonderful in the part. A few have been a little less wonderful. But only one has ever come really close to playing the part exactly the way I imagined it when I first wrote it.

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Marilyn Monroe doesn't just play The Girl. She is The Girl. Marilyn once told me that playing the part had helped her to find out who she is. Which is a pretty nice thing for a writer to hear from an actress.

I am revealing no breathtaking secret when I say that Marilyn has a reputation for being not the easiest actress in the world to work with. Her eagerness and ambition cause her to tense up. She has difficulty remembering lines. She has been known to drive directors stark, raving mad. However, an interesting thing happened during the shooting of "Itch." My favorite scene in the picture comes close to the end. It is a kind of serious and extremely difficult scene in which The Girl explains to the hero (who, to all outward appearances, is the least dashing, least glamorous, least romantic man alive) why she finds him exciting and attractive and why his wife has every reason to be jealous.

You will notice that there are no photographs in the book of the shooting of this particular scene. Because of its difficulty and the fact that it ends with a long speech from The Girl, it was generally assumed that the scene would take several days to get on film. For that reason Sam Shaw, who made all the photographs in these pages, did not even bother to get out his camera on the first take—he figured the scene would be going on for days. Three minutes later it was all over. Marilyn had done it, letter-perfect and

with an emotional impact that caused the entire sound stage to burst into applause at the end, on the first take. There was no need for a second.

She told me later that she was able to do the scene because she believed every word of what she was saying and because it seemed to her like the story of her own life. As it might be interesting to see what it is that Marilyn so firmly believed in, I reprint below the end of the scene exactly as it appears in the shooting script:

SCENE 85. LIVINGROOM. DAY. MEDIUM  
TWO SHOT. RICHARD AND THE GIRL.

RICHARD

Let's face it—no pretty girl in her right mind wants *me*. She wants Gregory Peck . . .

THE GIRL

How do you know what a pretty girl wants? You think every pretty girl is a dope. You think a girl goes to a party and there is some guy—a great big lunk in a fancy striped vest, strutting around like a tiger—giving you that "I'm so handsome, you can't resist me" look—and from this she is supposed to fall flat on her face. Well, she doesn't fall flat on her face.

But there's another guy in the room . . . way over in the corner . . . maybe he's kind



of nervous and shy and perspiring a little. . . . First you look past him, but then you sort of sense that he is gentle and kind and worried and that he'll be tender with you and nice and sweet, and that's what's *really* exciting!

If I were your wife, I'd be jealous of you. . . .  
I'd be very, very jealous.

(She kisses him)

THE GIRL  
(Very sincere)  
I think you're just elegant!

I have been asked a few times if there is any symbolic significance to the fact that *The Girl* has no name. I generally hem and haw a little—but the real truth of the matter is that I could never think of a name for her that seemed exactly right, that really fit the girl I had in mind. I think, if I were writing the play today, I might be tempted to call *The Girl* Marilyn.

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THIS is the story of a girl who works for a living. Her name is Marilyn Monroe; she's an actress. Her job is to entertain some tens of millions of people—more than a few of whom, it would seem, are male.

In this book you will follow (and sometimes precede) Miss Monroe as she makes a Cinemascope movie entitled "The Seven Year Itch," released by 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation, in which she plays a character known simply as *The Girl*. You will go to New York with her to shoot some sequences; then back to Hollywood on the set before, during, and after takes, behind the scenes, in the dressing room; you will go to conferences with the director, the make-up man, and the cameraman; you will go to a party to celebrate the completion of the picture. You will get a pretty good idea of what it's like to live through the making of a movie.

Almost all of these pictures were unposed; they were snapped "candidly."

Be *The Girl's* guest.

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**PART ONE**

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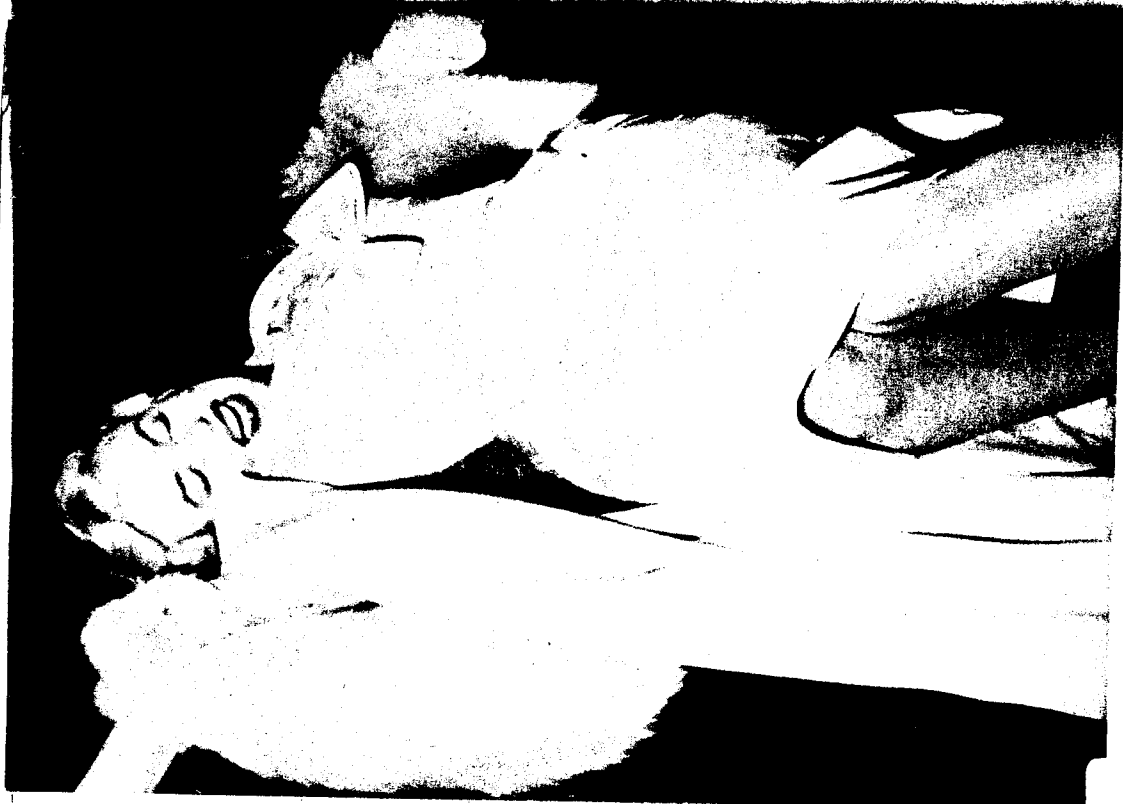
All pictures start with conferences.  
Here it is decided to shoot the New  
York street scenes first—and to shoot  
them in New York.

13



... and MM steps out into the early morning.

15



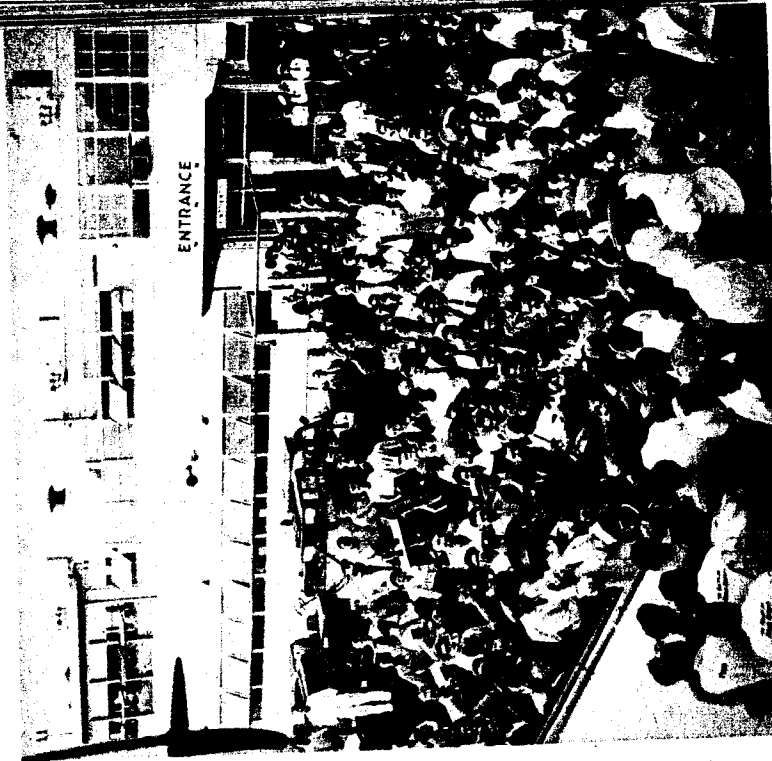
So, soon after, a plane arrives at  
La Guardia field . . . at 8 A.M. . . .

14



The natives are friendly . . . and curious.

16



The reporters and photographers volunteered eagerly for this 8 A.M. assignment and they behave like a crowd of fans. If MM seems overwhelmed, it's because she was.

17

They wish a kiss blown to them.



18

They get it.



19



Then one shot for the hangar crew to  
show their girls.

20



The last time she was here she was a  
bit player on a publicity jaunt for a  
picture. New York looks nicer now.  
The trip to town is quick . . .

21

... but word spreads even quicker.



It's the Hotel St. Regis, but if Madam  
can take her shoes off, she's home.

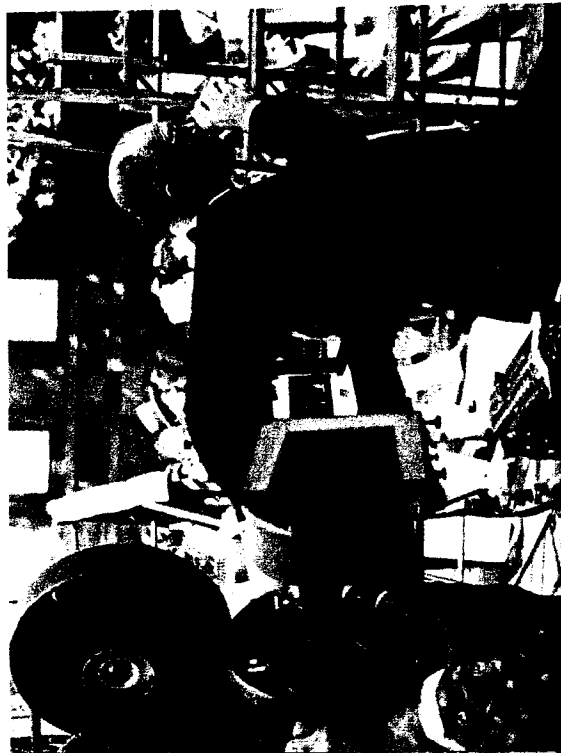
... a brief lift, then off to work.



A brief moment's rest . . .



Director Billy Wilder has the same idea. He and his crew have been busy for hours, setting up for this scene.



This is the scene they're shooting. Tom Ewell, the male lead in "The Seven Year Itch," comes home. The Girl is at the window drying her hair. She says: "Hi. I just washed my hair." He says: "That's nice." In the picture it takes about ten seconds.



But the director doesn't like the first take. MM leans out to hear his comments.

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And she responds to comments from a few casual passers-by.

29

They try the scene again.



This close-up demonstrates the type of hair-dryer used in the scene.

Wilder, a perfectionist, still is not satisfied; so they try it again.



Waiting . . . while the camera angle is shifted and improved.

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And a few spectators express mild interest. (They ask for locks of hair—among other things.)

Not too tired to be glad.

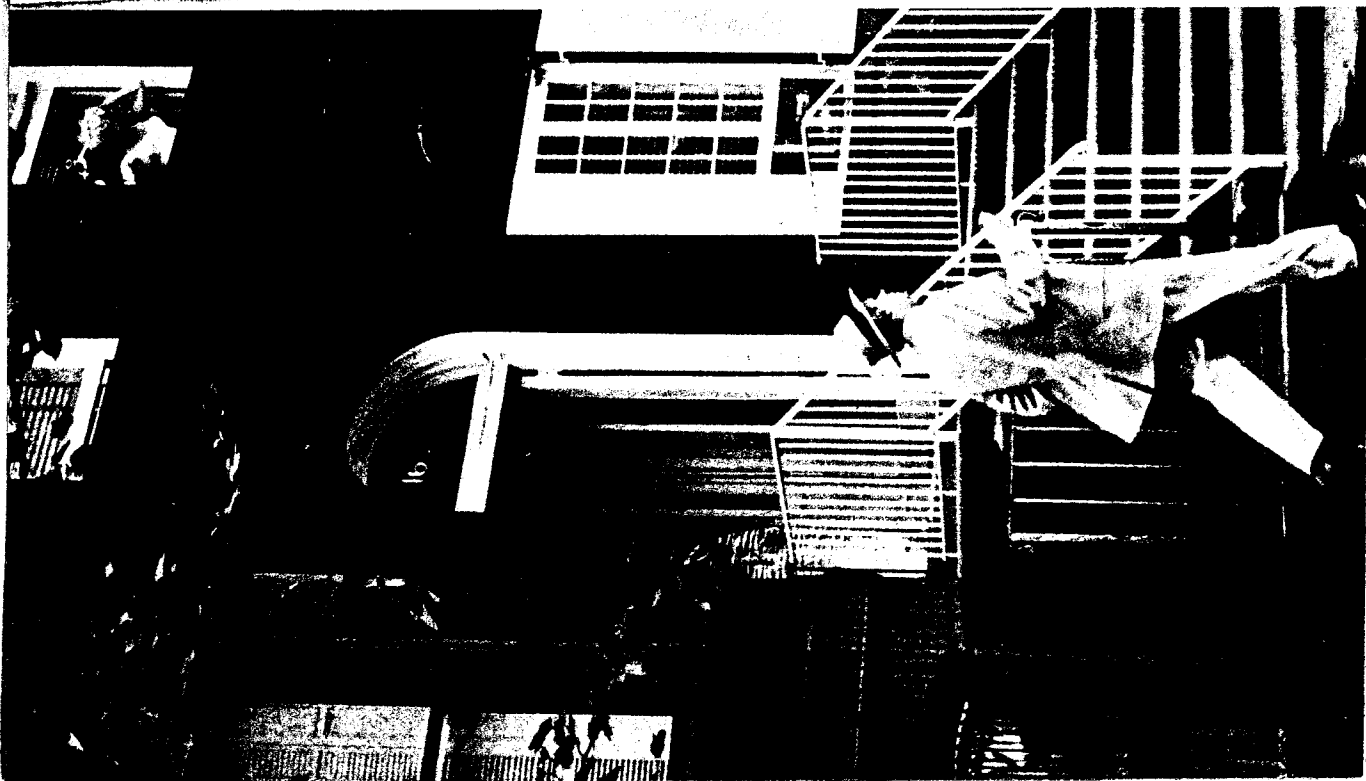
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The take is tried again and again . . .



. . . and again. . . .

37





And again.